

# Career Lecture Series

## Understanding Workplace Diversity in Today's Complex World

Presented by:

Leo Parvis, Ph.D.

**WALDEN UNIVERSITY**  
*A higher degree. A higher purpose.*

# Understanding Workplace Diversity



***Steve Hardiman***  
Host



***Shannon R. Mouton***  
Alumni Relations Manager

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# Career Services Center

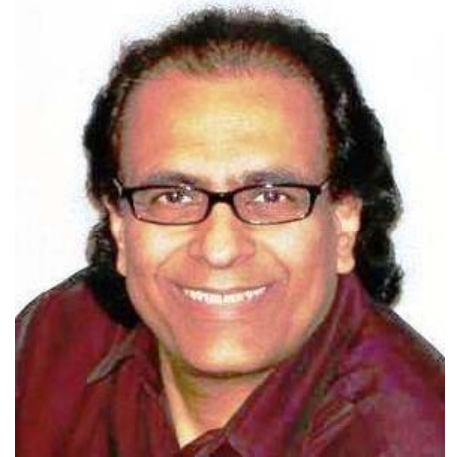
- Website: <http://careercenter.waldenu.edu>  
Self-assessment, Research, Resumes, CV's, Interviewing and other Topics
- Career Services Blog
- Archived Career Lecture Series webinars
- Please join Walden University's LinkedIn group at: [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

# About the Presenter

## Leo Parvis, Ph.D.

- President, diversitypromotions.com and Embrace publications
- Consulting LLC Professor, social and behavioral sciences, Dunwoody College, Minneapolis
- 2004 winner of the Dunwoody Observer Award for Achieving Excellence
- 2007 winner of the Walden University Outstanding Alumni Award

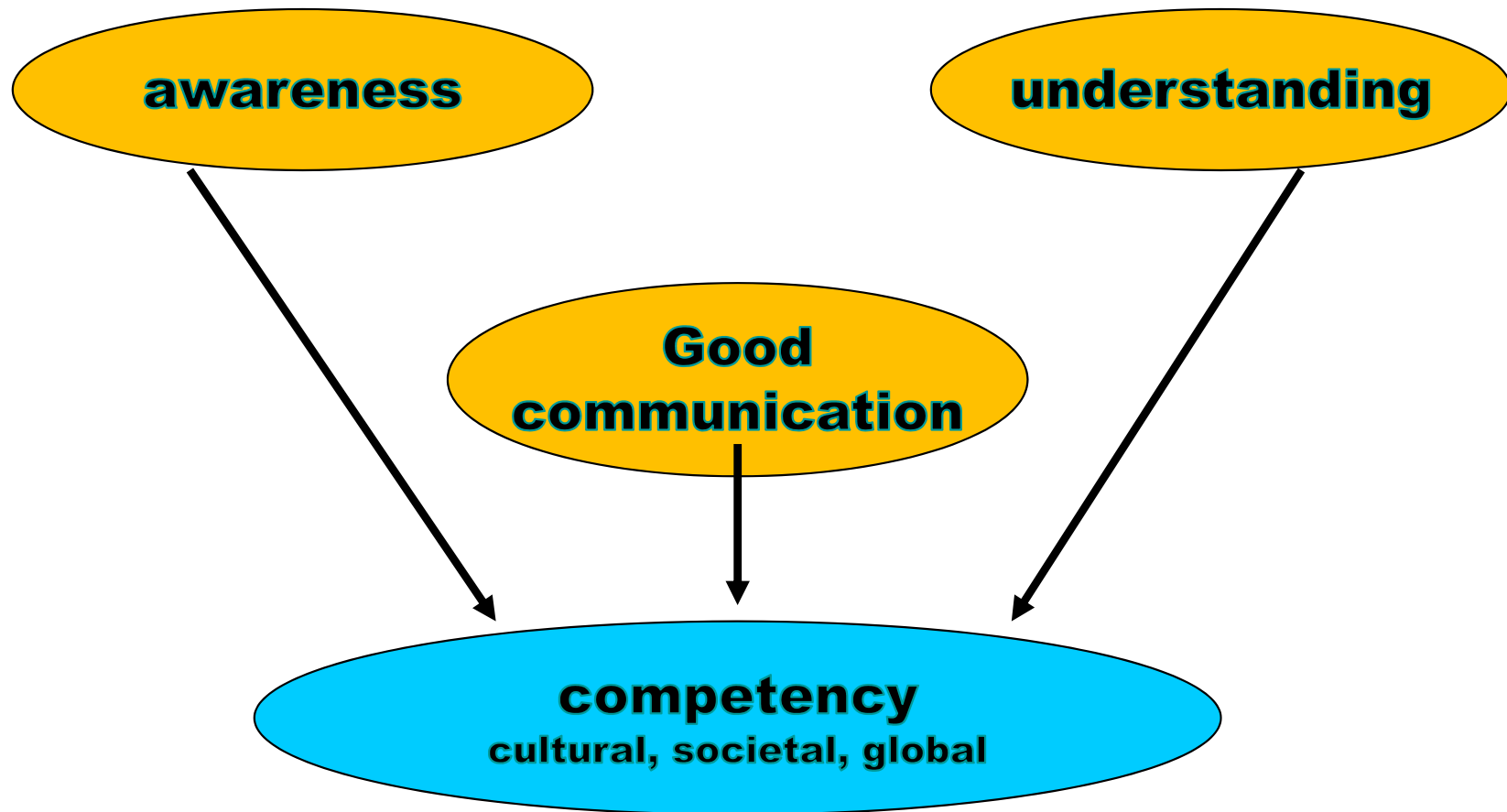
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# Introduction

- Teilhard de Chardin saw education and love as the two most important agents of progress. Educate yourself, educate others, and love...
- Seeing diversity through different lenses...
- Choosing between *cynicism* and *optimism*—the big struggle of our time!
- Competency is made possible by awareness, understanding, and good communication

# Key Elements of Diversity Education



# Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Today's diversity is valued as a result of multiculturalism. The melting pot remains a myth because it did not work for all Americans! Some were not invited to join, some did not want to!
- Multiculturalism is a FACT and grows rapidly.
- Other significant parts of diversity in today's complex world are: disability, age, sexual orientation, beliefs, and more...

# Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

continued...

**Multiculturalism**



**FACT**

**Melting Pot**



**MYTH**

# Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

continued...

“ The demographics of America are changing inexorably and at lightning speed, and the claims of new immigrants won’t fit neatly into the black-and-white paradigm of discrimination and resistance and guilt and recrimination.”

-President Obama

# Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## continued...Some Statistical Information:

Source: U.S. Census, 2008

- US Population: 304 Million
- Languages spoken in the USA: 337
- Languages spoken in the world: 7000
- US Ethnic Groups:
  - White (Non-Hispanic): 66%
  - Hispanic: 15%
  - Black: 13%
  - Asian: 5%
  - Native American: 1%
- White America:
  - First Ancestry (German): 36 Million
  - First Ancestry (Irish): 22 Million
- First Ancestry (English): 19 Million
- First Ancestry (Italian): 14 Million
- First Ancestry (Polish): 7 Million
- First Ancestry (French): 5.6 Million

# Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century continued...Some Statistical Information:

Source: U.S. Census, 2008

- Disability (general): 54.4 million
- Disability (severe): 35 million
- Gays and Lesbians: 15.3 million
- Elderly Population: 47 million
- Baby Boomers (1946-1964): 77.3 million
- Generation X (1965-1980): 64 million
- Generation Y (1981-1999): 43 million

# Differences in everyday SOP (Standard Operative Procedures)

Understanding differences create positive working environment:

- Shake hands?
- Bow to greet?
- Eating habit
- Dress style
- GLBT life style
- Religious obligation
- Belief
- Time concept (clock time, process time)

# Challenges of Diversity

“ISM” things

Race → Racism

Sex → Sexism

Age → Ageism

Able → Ableism

Class → Classism

Other



homophobia, xenophobia, stereotype, bias, prejudice, intolerance, exclusion, marginalization, etc.

**These are recipes for discrimination!**

# Stereotype

- Avoid negative stereotypes, they are hurtful: (i.e. Native American are gamblers...)
- Positive Stereotypes are neutral: (African Americans are good musicians)
- Gossiping is an association with assumption, judging, and stereotyping
- Generalization is based on false assumptions.

*Stereotypical assumptions are stumbling blocks in any workplace.*

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*Stereotypical assumptions are stumbling blocks in any workplace.*

# Visualization

My prejudice or acceptance is based on my visualization.

- Example:
- Subject → Immigrants
- Judgment → good, bad, helpful, scary, etc.
- Source → workplace, U.S. borders, media

*To avoid: Replace negative mentality with positive thinking*

# Emotional Intelligence

- In today's diverse work environment emotional intelligence (EI) helps you to reduce stress and frustration caused by the lack of understanding and miscommunication.
- When you elevate your EI you feel comfortable to work with anyone!
- EI has direct correlation with positive thinking
- EI is an excellent attribute for any workplace
- EI helps you to control your thinking, your behavior, even your feelings!

# Emotional Intelligence

continued...

- Emotional Intelligence is a concept that should be increased in any individual to overcome challenges of diversity
- Besides all “Ism Things,” other challenges such as homophobia, bias, prejudice, stereotype, intolerance, exclusion, and marginalization, to name a few, can be overcome by the benefit of EI. Simply, avoid doing them!

# Benefits of Diversity

- Appreciate differences
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Cross-cultural experiences
- Unique opportunity for all
- Exploration of human dignity
- Utmost productivity

# Synergy and Diversity

- Combining differences in a positive way to create a stronger whole
- Synergy in diversity is the basis that holds us all together for the enhancement of the multicultural society we represent.
- Putting synergy to work is the essence of productivity in our workplaces.

“From synergy, we extract service energy and an opportunity to serve.”

-[www.bna.com/bnac](http://www.bna.com/bnac)

# Competency (cultural, societal, global)

- **In order to acquire competency in diversity one needs to...**
- Accept
- Respect
- Be sociable/network
- Explore
- Help out
- Give and nurture
- Become a civic leader

# Competency (cultural, societal, global)

continued...

- Cover basics of diversity issues
- Encourage open communication among coworkers
- Listen carefully and probe for more info
- Follow-through on promises
- Encourage interaction between various cultures. Don't favor one over the others
- Create trust among colleagues
- Don't tolerate discrimination in any form

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# Effective Communication

- Three elements of decency suggested by Zoroastrianism, 1200 BC can well fit into our 21<sup>st</sup> century managing diversity in the workplace: ***Good Thought; Good Deed; Good Expression***
- The third element advises us that effective communication is attainable through patience, understanding, and interconnectedness.

# Effective Communication

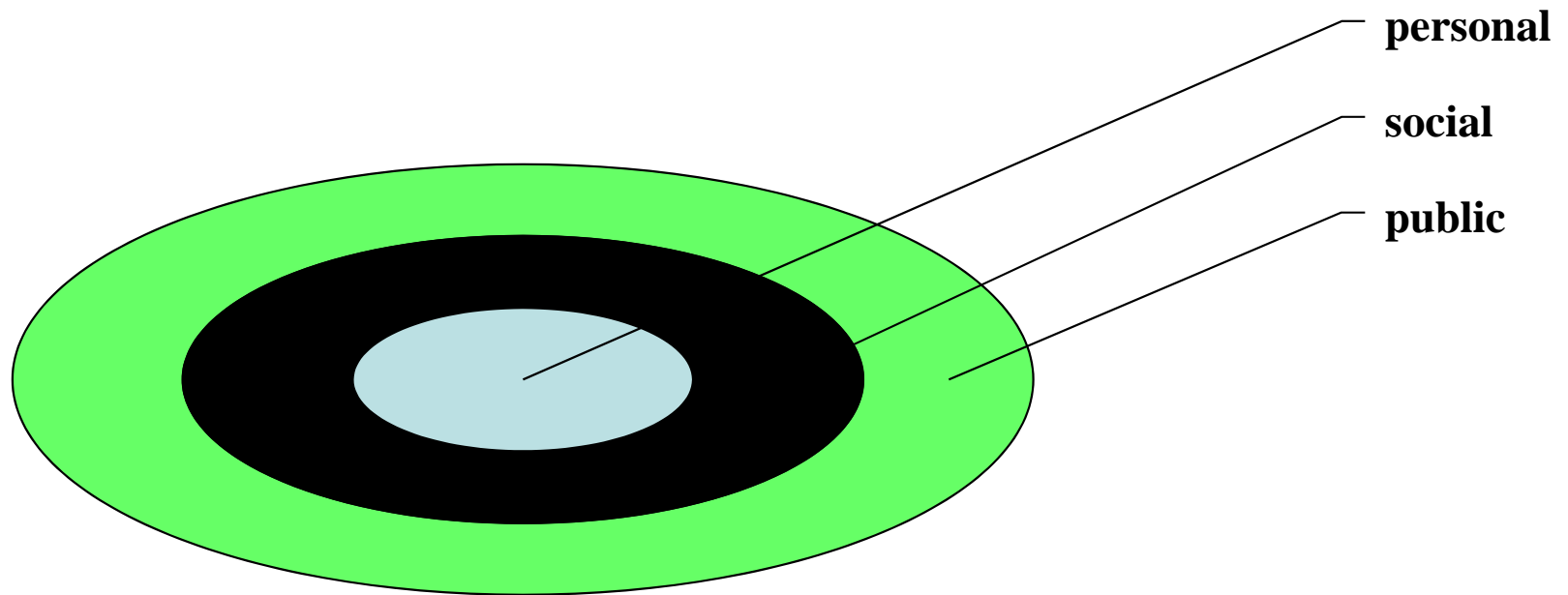
continued...

- Good communication is a useful skill.
- Probe different styles of communication (high context and low context; i.e. Americans: low context; Asians: high context). People from North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan, India, and Latin America may fit in the high context category.

# Effective Communication

continued...

Zones of Interaction: (personal: 0'-4'/social: 2'-4'/public: 4' and more)



# Effective Communication

continued...

- It's imperative to know the zones of interaction to avoid any faux pas.
- Our comfort zones are barriers for interaction and communication.
- In multicultural situations, misunderstandings may arise because the size of our comfort zone. (invisible bubble) varies from culture to culture.
- Avoid using slang and jargon.

# Effective Communication

continued...

- **Silence:**

The presence or absence of silence can generate misunderstanding.

For example, silence is rare in Latin cultures. In Far Eastern cultures, silence is common. In Southwest Asia silence is the sign of satisfaction.

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy

“I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world.”

--Socrates (470-399 B.C.)

There are two key dimensions to global learning:  
1) helping others to open themselves to positive change, and 2) developing the ability to value diversity

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy

continued...

## Some Tips:

- Learning cultural differences are vital in global business.
- Know the expectations of your multicultural business partners.
- Find out how business is handled in your target area.
- Prepare to be a good host when having a guest from a different culture.
- Learning the language of your.....guest is rewarding—at least some hospitable words.

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

1. You are in a business meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. You are offered a small cup of tea or coffee. After your cup has been refilled several times, you decide you would rather not have anymore. How do you decline the next cup offered to you?
  - a. Place your palm over the top of the cup when the teapot is passed.
  - b. Turn your empty cup upside down on the table.
  - c. Hold the cup and twist your wrist from side to side.

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

1. You are in a business meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. You are offered a small cup of tea or coffee. After your cup has been refilled several times, you decide you would rather not have anymore. How do you decline the next cup offered to you?
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# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

2. In which of the following countries are you expected to be punctual for business meetings?
- a. Peru
  - b. Hong Kong
  - c. Japan
  - d. China
  - e. Morocco

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

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- ✓ b. Hong Kong
- ✓ c. Japan
- ✓ d. China
- ✓ e. Morocco

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

3. Gift giving is prevalent in Japanese society. A business acquaintance presents you with a small wrapped package. Do you:
- Open the present immediately and thank the giver
  - Thank the giver and open the present later
  - Suggest that the giver opens the present for you

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# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

4. In which of the following countries is tipping considered an insult?
- a. Great Britain
  - b. Iceland
  - c. Canada

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

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# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

5. What is the normal work week in Saudi Arabia?

- a. Monday through Friday
- b. Saturday through Wednesday
- c. Friday through Tuesday

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# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

6. You are in a business meeting in Seoul. Your Korean business associate hands you his calling card, which states his name in the traditional Korean order: Park Chul Su. How do you address him?
- a. Mr. Su
  - b. Mr. Park
  - c. Mr. Chul

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  - c. Mr. Chul

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

7. In general, which of the following would be good topics of conversation in Latin American countries?
- a. Sports
  - b. Religion
  - c. Local politics
  - d. The weather
  - e. Travel

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

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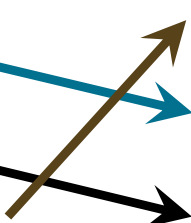
# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

8. In many countries, visitors often are entertained in the homes of the clients. Taking flowers as a gift to the hostess is usually a safe way to express thanks for the hospitality. However, both the type and the color of the flower can have amorous, negative, or even ominous implications. Match the country where presenting them would be a social faux pas (a blunder).

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| a. Brazil      | 1. Red Roses      |
| b. France      | 2. Purple Flowers |
| c. Switzerland | 3. Chrysanthemums |

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| b. <b>France</b>      |  | 2. <b>PURPLE FLOWERS</b> |
| c. <b>Switzerland</b> |   | 3. <b>Chrysanthemums</b> |

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

9. In most Middle Eastern countries, which hand does one use to accept or pass food?
- a. Left hand
  - b. Right hand
  - c. Either hand

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# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz

10. Body language is just as important as the spoken word in many countries. For example, in most countries, the thumbs up sign means 'OK'. But in which of the following countries is the sign a rude gesture?

- a. Germany
- b. Italy
- c. Australia
- d. Canada

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- ✓ **c. Australia**
- d. Canada

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz: How many questions did you answer correctly?

0 – 1

2

3

4

5

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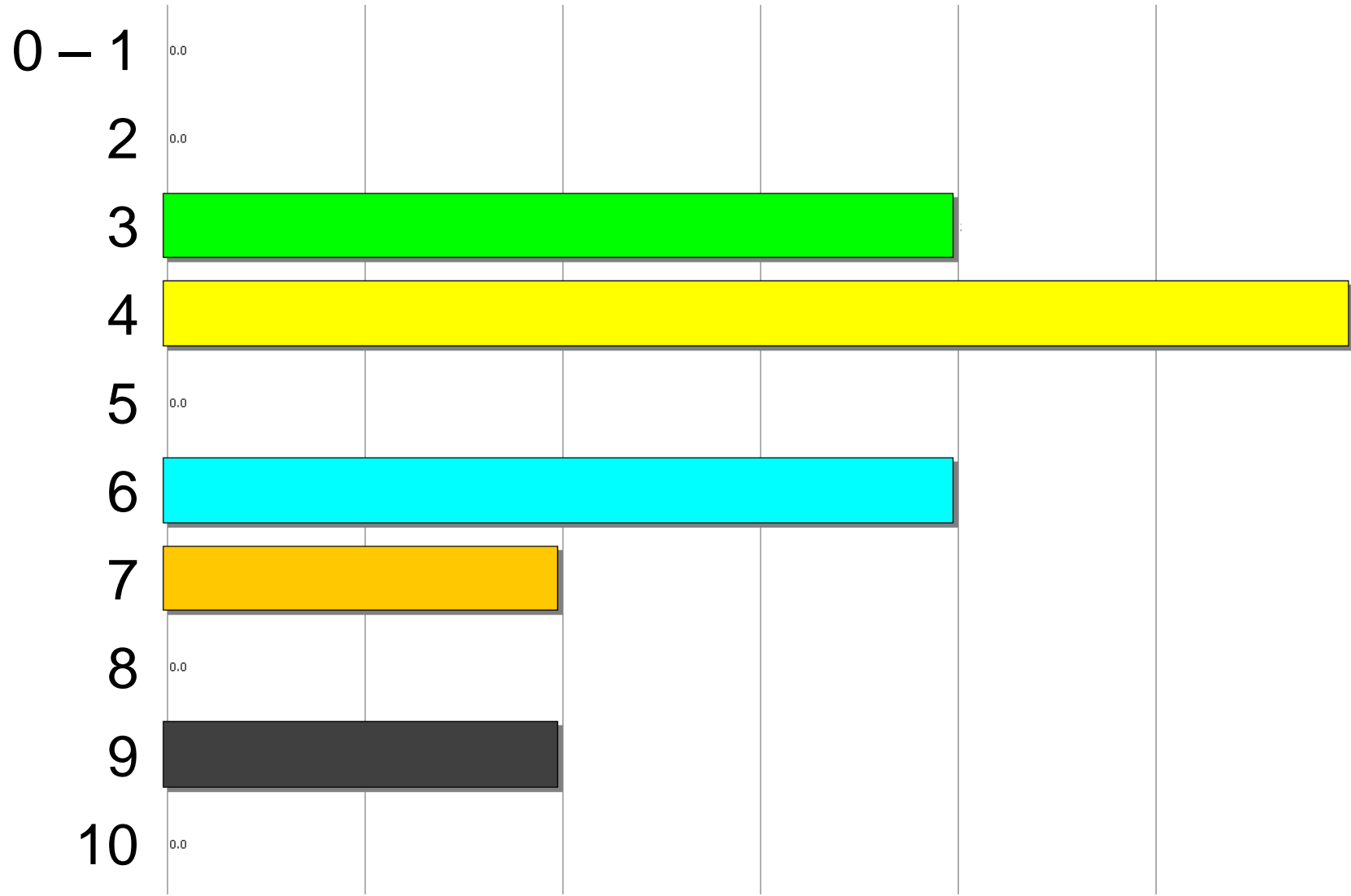
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10

# Managing Diversity in a Global Economy Quiz: How many questions did you answer correctly?



# Thank You for Participating!

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